

NORTH QUEENSLAND ETHNOGRAPHY.¹

BULLETIN No. 9.

BURIAL CEREMONIES, AND DISPOSAL OF THE DEAD.

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(Plates lxxviii.-lxxiv., figs. 56-60).

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1. The interpretation of many of the gruesome details embodied in the following pages will be rendered intelligible by bearing in mind that, speaking generally, the main purport of the ceremonies connected with the disposal of the dead is to avenge the deceased,

¹ Bulletins 1-8 inclusive were presented to both Houses of Parliament in Brisbane (see Queensland Parliamentary Papers, 1901-1906), and subsequently printed and published by the Government Printer (George Arthur Vaughan). The collections, on which much of the matter contained in these "Bulletins" depends, having now passed into the possession of the Trustees of the Australian Museum, Dr. Roth's notes will from time to time appear in the "Records."—Editor.

and by so doing, to insure the well-being of the survivors. Death, disease and accident are not natural phenomena in that they are believed to be due directly or indirectly to human agency,² to some enemy in the flesh or spirit³ dooming the individual to a particular form of death *e.g.* by lightning, flood, spear: it is this spirit of the dead in one form or another that brings all their troubles and dangers to the living, and hence the anxiety of the latter to satisfy its claims to the last farthing. Furthermore, the influence for good or for evil of such spirits is to be judged from the bodies whence they have been originally derived,⁴ with the result that the spirits of women, children, infirm and invalid old men, whom, during life, the survivors had no reason to fear, need not be bothered about in the way of ceremonial to the same extent as is considered necessary with the more virile of the men.⁵ Deceased warriors have to be well propitiated to prevent them returning to do evil to the living. On these lines, the differences in the funeral obsequies depending upon the prowess, sex, age, etc. of the departed can be accounted for, minor distinctions in the methods of holding the inquest and discovering the culprit varying with the modifications in local superstitions.

Again, this ignorance of the true meaning of death leads to difficulties in recognising the period of its occurrence,⁶ the exact time of the spirit's release from its fleshy prison; these difficulties are all the more excusable when it is remembered that the spirit, vital principle,⁷ etc., may be associated either with the shadow, breath, heart, after-birth, ears or nose, and hence can be seen, heard, smelt, etc. As a consequence, it comes about that the deceased may speak and be spoken to, that he may be supplied with victuals at the grave-side, that he may be fixed in the best position suitable to allow of him watching the ceremonial dances etc. carried out in his especial honour, and that he may be decorated to such an extent as will satisfy his vanity to the full. It thus also follows that only when the spirit has been propitiated and avenged (by the sacrifice of another's, etc.) that what remains of

² Bull. 5—Sects. 113, 114.

³ Bull. 5—Sects. 115, 116.

⁴ Bull. 5—Sect. 65 *et seq.*, 74, etc.

⁵ Bull. 5—The names of females which are necessarily tabu after death, Sect. 72.

⁶ The Pitta Pitta natives of Boulia use the same word *i-chi* to express the verbs to die, to lie down.

⁷ Bull. 5—Sects. 65 to 70.

the corpse is finally disposed of for good and all, that the deceased's property is divided, the widow taken to wife, and the signs of mourning discarded.

The significance of the eating of the body wholly, or in part, is certainly very difficult to understand. The practice is found indulged in by perhaps only the few immediate relatives to practically the entire camp, while the flesh eaten may be limited to that of virile men only, or again, male and female, old and young, may all be partaken of. The natives will admit that their feelings in the matter are prompted by sentiments akin to love and affection, by hunger, by ideas of sanitation,⁸ by a sense of punishment and spite,⁹ and by fear.¹⁰ Without any leading question, and I have made the enquiry over and over again for years past, I have never yet succeeded in learning from an aboriginal, living under native conditions, that the individual who eats human flesh benefits in any way by acquiring the moral or physical qualities of the person made a meal off: no male, with any respect for himself, would wish to obtain the attributes of a woman or child.

In all cases, the widow becomes ultimately the property of one or other of her late husband's group- or blood-brothers.¹¹ On the Bloomfield River when a single man dies, the woman to whom he may have been betrothed, but not yet cohabitated with, may be betrothed again, or married straight away. The widow, though she may be found now and again even after her re-marriage wearing her late husband's necklet, forehead band, etc., has nowhere any legal right to his property, chiefly consisting of fighting-weapons, which usually passes to one of his brothers.

The deceased's hut is usually burnt, or taken to pieces.

White and red, one or other, or both, are the colours adopted by the mourners: the former would seem to savour rather of grief pure and simple, the latter being more signifiatory of the avenging sentiment. Elsewhere¹² will be seen a description of the various decorations peculiar to such circumstances, some of them donned only according to the age, sex, rank, etc. of the deceased individual, whilst others (such as the cross-shoulder

⁸ *I.e.* to prevent exposure of the body with concomitant "stinking."

⁹ Bull. 3—Sect. 38.

¹⁰ Safe in the knowledge that having eaten the corpse, the impossibility of itself or its spirit returning to do them harm is assured.

¹¹ *See* Marriage.—Widows.

¹² *See* Decoration.—Clothing.

ornaments) which in certain districts may be absolutely distinctive of the period of mourning may in other areas have no such significant importance whatever.

2. On the Pennefather River, which is fairly typical of the procedures usually followed in the upper portions of Cape York Peninsula, differences in the burial ceremonies vary much with the age and sex of the individual concerned. Old men and women, as well as young women, are buried within a day or two after decease in the neighbourhood of the camping-ground, and the camp shifted. Children are usually put out of sight directly after death, though sometimes they may be carried about, wrapped up in bark, until they get dried, before being stowed away rather than buried, among the roots of a tree, in a cave, etc. The father of the child does not visibly appear to be much concerned over its death, though the mother takes it to heart, and will put on mourning in the form of shell necklaces and chest ornaments which appear to be used only in the case of deaths of infants and children: the necklaces are placed either around the neck or from one shoulder across to be opposite armpit, and are made of *Solen*, *Olivæ* and *Columbella* shells, while the special chest ornaments are manufactured from the pearl shell, or *Mallemus*. When young men die the body is at once put into a sheet of bark, bound round and round, and slung to a pole supported by two forks,¹³ but in the neighbourhood of Margaret Bay, the body may be slung up without any bark covering except a dilly-bag or two over the head (Pl. lxviii., fig. 1). Until such time as the corpse becomes dried, the number of months depending upon the season, etc., there is a singing and stamping performance taking place over it morning and evening. The mourners both male and female cover themselves completely with charcoal, and with beeswax stick on their forelock anything of a red colour, usually either a feather of the Blue Mountain Paroquet, or (the women) a flower of *Erythrina vespertilio*: the women in addition tie a particular kind of fibre-string (Bull. 2—Sect. 15) round the belly and arms, this string being often coloured red, and on the Peninsula Coast-line, certainly in the neighbourhood of Pennefather River and Margaret Bay, may wear a special kind of cap manufactured on the same pattern as the local dilly-bag; it is known as a Nggara (NGG).¹⁴ While the men sit or stand around the slung corpse,

¹³ These two forked uprights often give the only clue to the charred remains scattered around.

¹⁴ Capital letters expressed in this manner were used by Dr. Roth throughout the former Bulletins to indicate names of the various tribes referred to. Thus NGG means the Nggerikudi Tribe of the Pennefather and Batavia Rivers. See Bull. 3, p. 3—Editor.

the women, advancing from a distance in pairs, keep singing and stamping as they approach: the stamping consists of a simultaneous jerking movement of both feet, the dust being thrown up with each jerk. There is a belief that by thus stamping there is a chance of bringing the life, vital principle, etc., (the Ngai or Cho-i¹⁵) back into the dead body: it is curious to note that the women make the same steps when an individual has a fainting fit¹⁶. If the young man met his death in the water a corresponding dance takes place in that element, the throwing up of the dust with the feet being now replaced by the splashing of the water with the hands. During the intervals between the morning and evening ceremonies, the women sit underneath the pole on which the corpse is tied. The body is finally burnt, with the exception of the head, the fibula bones (NGG, pau-uto or pau-to), the soles of the feet (NGG, Ko-e-ana), and the fleshy portions of the fronts of the thighs. Where the corpse is burnt, the nearest tree is marked with a sloping vertical cut, and the camp shifted: it is believed that when once the body is cremated, there is no more chance of the Cho-i coming back in the flesh, but that it hovers somewhere about the bush. The decapitated head is carried about in a piece of bark, or a dilly-bag, etc., by the mother. The fibula-bones are wrapped in match-box bark or tea-tree bark, tied round and round with fibre-twine (raddled or not) and further decorated with Emu, Blue Mountain Paroquet, Cockatoo, or Native-Companion feathers (Pl. lxi): such a pau-to is slung either from around the forehead so as to hang over the nape of the neck, or else over the fore-arm. The individual who thus carries these personal mementoes is a son of the deceased's sister: the onus of preserving these relics may thus fall upon two, three, or more men sometimes. Furthermore, the portions of deceased's flesh (thighs, and feet) when originally cut from the corpse are baked in the ashes, and cut up into little bits to be eaten one or two at a time morning and evening by the same individual or individuals who are responsible for the pau-to. The eating process takes from two to three months, sometimes longer, to complete, and throughout all this period the person remains dumb, and is known as *tè-itima*: he is supposed to actually lose the power of speech, and though going about his business as usual, expresses himself only by signs, claps his hands if he wants to attract other people's attention, maintains the signs of mourning, and lets his

¹⁵ Bull 5—Sect. 68.

¹⁶ Bull 5—Sect. 70, last paragraph.

hair grow.¹⁷ But during all this loss of speech, the *té-itima*, when done with the eating of the human flesh, has gradually discovered the murderer who doomed the deceased, and by the time that he is convinced of the identity, he finds himself in the centre of a group of old men bending towards him with their faces to the ground: speech returning, he commences with a guttural, then a babble, and so gradually expresses himself more and more distinctly when he gives his hearers the name of the guilty party. He subsequently makes an *ombo*, or death-charm, in the form of three or four bone-needles¹⁸ splintered from the fibula which he has been carrying with him. With this *ombo* the deceased is subsequently avenged on the murderer, either at the hands of the victim's sister's son as already mentioned, or should a convenient opportunity present itself, by the victim's mother's-father's-brother's son. Should the *ombo* fail to take immediate effect the accused may have to stand the ordeal of having spears thrown at him,¹⁹ and this may lead to general fighting and trouble.

3. Down the Lower Gulf Coast, *e.g.*, on the Lower Mitchell, Nassau, and Staaten Rivers, very little reliable information is forthcoming concerning procedures, relative to the disposal of the dead. In large measure this is due to the natives being still in their pristine condition, and frightened of strangers, European settlements few and far between, and no interpreters available. As far as my investigations led me, however, I was satisfied that with one or two variations, the funeral obsequies are run generally speaking, on the same lines as at the Pennefather River. One such variation is that during the period of discovering the individual guilty of killing the deceased, the nearer relatives in place of losing their powers of speech, have to avoid eating red-meats, *e.g.* opossum, bandicoot, kangaroo, cattle, such foods as iguana, &c, being permissible. A singular restriction from red meats by the nearer relatives has also been met with amongst the Maytown and Middle Palmer River Natives (Koko-minni Blacks). Furthermore, instead of carrying about the deceased's fibula, etc., or *pau-to*, the avenging relatives wear in similar position an ornament covered with *Abrus* seeds, which is said to contain portions of deceased's flesh (Pl. lxx.) this same decoration may on occasion thus become the sign of a challenge to fight. This ornament

¹⁷ I have seen such dumb men even at the Mapoon Mission (Batavia River) so late as 1898, and since then on the Embley and Archer Rivers, and at the Moreton Electric Telegraph Office.

¹⁸ Bull. 5—Sect. 136.

¹⁹ Bull. 8—Sect. 13.

(KMI. lin-ji-ila), on the Middle Palmer River is about six inches long, gradually enlarging towards its extremity, formed on a basis of black cement substance encircled on its upper half with kangaroo twine, and studded over its lower with *Abrus precatorius* or sometimes *Adeanthera abrosperma* berries. When the berries are not obtainable, the kangaroo twine may be alone employed; it is of course only used by males.

4. At Princess Charlotte Bay, although every effort is made to prevent a fatal termination to sickness or accident within the precincts of a camp, by removing the moribund patient to a distance, there appears to be no compunction about bringing the corpse back immediately after death, and temporarily burying it well within the camping ground. The restrictions of the tabu are applied to the actual spot where death takes place. The mourners, men and women, alternately sleep at and cry over the grave, wear mourning belts (men) or chain strings (women) and cover themselves with mud. The belts, similar to those at Cape Bedford, are wound round the waists, and are made of a central core of opossum-, or human-hair string, around which another twine is tightly coiled.²⁰ The chain-strings²¹ are worn either over one shoulder across to, and under the opposite arm-pit, or else round the neck, one individual thus wearing three different sets at the same time. After some three or four days, when the friends and relatives who have been sent for are gathered round, the body is exhumed, and packed up in a piece of bark the ends of which overlap like a tongue, while the sides are sewn across in single boot-lace style. In this fashion the corpse is carried about from camp to camp for a long period, many months maybe, indeed until such time as the deceased tells his brother, uncle, etc., who it was that doomed or put him to death. But should he not choose to tell, his relatives will find out for themselves by means of hair-twine made from hair removed from the corpse. As this is being manufactured and rolled and stretched along the thigh,²² the names of suspected persons are called aloud; the name at which it breaks is that of the person who committed the deed. If the individual thus detected lives in some other district, the hair-twine is mended, forwarded to one of the deceased's relatives in that neighbourhood who takes his revenge and sends it back when completed, in fact the return of the twine shows that the alleged assailant has paid the forfeit with his life. On occasion, especially in the case of women and

²⁰ Bull. 1.—Section 15.

²¹ Bull. 1.—Section 12.

²² Bull. 1.—Section 2.

children, the mourner will watch night after night at the grave to try and find out the guilty party. At any rate, when once what is considered to be sufficient proof is forthcoming as to the identity of the murderer, he is followed about for many a long day, so that he should forget all about it and not have his suspicions aroused until a suitable opportunity occurs for either spearing or choking him, especially when no one else is present. But should the alleged culprit get some private information that he is "wanted" on the charge, so to speak, he may prove too cunning and wide-awake to be caught. Under such circumstances he will be waited for some evening while in camp, perhaps engaged on a corroboree, etc., when he will be struck with a spear from somewhere under cover of the darkness, or the shelter of the trees. On examining the spear which has struck him, his mates will see that it is mud-painted, and by this sign will recognise why he has been put out of the way. If by any chance the alleged murderer should eventually escape vengeance, the life of his mother, brother, or sister will be forfeited, and only when such penalty has been paid does the victim's corpse cease its peregrinations to be permanently buried deep down in the ground.

5. The following account of the disposal of the dead at Cape Bedford was written for me (1902) in her own language²³ by Mulun²⁴ one of the black women at the local Hope Valley Mission, and thanks to the superintendents, the Revs. Schwarz and Poland, I am enabled to supply its free translation.²⁵

Gurabudo	bama-ngai	duyu	merelil.	Bama	bieni,	bama
Again	men	death	tell.	Man	(when) died,	man
warka-ngamu	ungga-dir-budongo	gura	gauwal	budongo		
altogether	a crying-with-very	and	scream	very		
bar-ngal.	Ngamu,	kanal,	dirnggur,	bemor,		
cry.	Mother,	elder-sister,	younger-sister,	fathers' sister,		
	gammi,	babbi,	ungga warka	batcheltchil.	Gura	
	mother's mother,	father's mother,	cry	many	cry.	And
	mangal	danangan-ngun	kambul	wudye-go	kmudandal;	yimbi,
	hand	their-with	belly	violently	strike;	lips,
	numbul,	kambogo	galmba.	Gura	bobowe	walli
	cheeks,	head	too.	And	ground-on	here-and-there
					down	

²³ Koko-yimidir, the grammar and structure of which is detailed in Bull. 2.

²⁴ Name signifying a Quandong.

²⁵ The description given is very complete, except that dealing with the inquest which she, on account of her sex, was not allowed to see. This portion, however, of the burial service is given in more detail in connection with the Bloomfield River Natives who are only about forty miles distant.

dadara gura dalmbakabaya bobo-we gura bobo
 go and throw (themselves) down ground-on and soil
 dambanbar mangal-nda, gura tamal-nda galmba bobo dabel-il.
 throw hands-with, and feet-with too ground kick.

Gura bama mala wudyego kaimbalmbal. Diraiinggur ngai
 And man guilty vehemently (they) scold. Old men
 galmba unggga batcheltelil warka. Gura dana galmba gari
 also cry cry very. But they too not
 yimidir unggga-we-go, gari bama kaimbalmbal, galmba gari
 similar crying-with, not man scold, also not
 bobo-we dalmbakabaya gura mangal-nda dodi danangan-go
 ground-on throw (themselves) and hands-with body their-own
 galmba gari kundandal. Galmba gari bama unggawe-go
 too not strike. Also (they) not men crying-for
 kaimbalmbal. Garko bera dana bama mala, mako-badaigo
 scold. By-and-bye certainly they man guilty, always
 ganil-nda kaimbalmbal. Ungga katabatega pitaigo dana
 song-with scold. Cry having broken a little they
 gamai-ga dudara. Gura dodi danangan-go durng-galng-gal;
 white-clay for go (quick). And body their smear;
 diraiinggur galmba gamai-nda durng-galng-gal mundal-go. Gura
 old men too white clay with smear some only. And
 ngamu, peba burla burla duy-u-wego unggga batchil-budo, burlangan
 mother, father both the dead-for cry cry-indeed, them both
 gamai bamal mandendi, garko burla durng-galng-gaya
 clay men fetch, by-and-bye those two smear each other
 gamai-budongo yitar kambogo-we gura dodi-we galmba.
 clay-much put head-on and body-on too.

Bama yaba bieni garka-ngun diral nangu-nga
 Man elder-brother died, younger-brother by wife him-of
 damalmal: nulu ngando bama yendu-me-gal bur-ngal-ngaya,
 spears: he women men others-before will pull
 yerka-ngu. Kalka nangun-ga yerka yendu-mun karbalbal,
 boy's on account of. Spear his own boy another-by hold,
 ngando gari dama-tinu. Ngalan ngurku pulega dana nima
 woman not shall throw. Sun evening falling they grave
 garbarenggo bakalkal, galbaigo yoku daba bandendil walmba
 middle in right dig long wood sticks cut platform
 ngada-galbaigo yitarnu-ngo, dikan galmba bur-ngal-ngal
 (kuce-extended, *i.e.*) in a line put-to, grass also pull,
 walmba-wego ngada-galbaigo nambur ngaranu-ngo bodu
 platform-for in a line resting-place spread-by, bark
 galmba mandendi wanggar-mun baichar-nu. Daku namo-dir
 also fetch above-from to cover. Things there-with

badatega, dana duyū mandendi. Ngamu nangu nulu kana finished, they corpse fetch. Mother his she first nima-we garbarubar unggā-dir-go. Gura kanal, dirnggur, grave-in jumps cry-with. And elder-sister, younger-sister, yumur, labbi, gammi, bemor, son(daughter), father's mother, father's father, father's younger sister dana duyū wogur-gur budo unggā-dir-go. Duyū yitarnu-ngo they corpse follow indeed crying-with. Corpse to put in-in order to garko ngamu nangu dawil wakur kadanu. Gura nula by-and-bye mother his they call outside to come. And she wakur kadaiga, dana nima-we yitar bodu-n baiteha, outside having come, they (him) grave-in put, bark-with cover, gura bobo-n kobarbil. Bama dana duyū kobarbil, gura dana and soil-with bury. Men they corpse bury, and those ngando-ngai duyū danaigo woguren, dana nawaigo nima-we women corpse before followed, they just-there grave-at unggā batcheltchil-budo. Duyū kana kobarbi-ga, garko a-weeping cry indeed. Corpse once buried, then ngando-ngai mundal kadara nima-we unggā batchinu-ngo. Gura women some come grave-to a cry to cry. And dana nanggor nawaigo nima-we-go dagalgaya mundal they camp just-there grave-at-just build some (coming) naka-nun, mundal gowringgar, mundal dibar-nun mundal east-from, some west-in, some south-from, some gunggar-nun. Dana wabalego nanggor dagalgaya gulboigo : north-from. They wide-spread camp build together :

duyū garbar-enggo(w)umana. Dana wudur nobungo barbega, corpse middle-in rests. They night one having-slept, ngando nulu unggā-dir-go kadara, gura dirainggur-be the woman she a crying-with comes, and old-men-to kambogo walli (w)umalma nangu kundanu-ngo, dana nangu head roundabout gives it to strike-for to, they her galmba kundandal. Gura milbiren. Ngando garbi-bud-ongo too strike. Also wommera-with. Woman blood-much-very dodi nangu-go ngalba garbi. Gura dana ngando-ngai body her-own all blood And they the women ngalan-be gumbin burnggar wogur-gur duyū-nga. Namo-dir day-during string mourning-string plait the dead-for. This badatega, garko gumbin-ngai gamai-ngu-nda durng-galng-gal, finished, then strings clay-with smear, garko manu-we goma yirngalngal gura gamur godera-me then neck-on together wind-round and arm-pit two-under yitar, burnga galmba wambirdamal kambogo-we yitarnu-ngo. put, dilly-bag also tear up head-on to put-for.

Namo-dir murga ngando-ngai wogur-gur, dirainggur gari,
 These only women plait, old-men not,
 dirainggur-be murga ngando-ngai wogur, gura dana birbalbal.
 old men-for only women plait, and they wear(them)

Gura peba-rgan burnga-ngai dumbelmbil gura diar yitar
 And father-by dilly-bags breaking(tearing) and hole put-in
 kambogo burnggatinu gura dana namodir-be burnggaya gura
 head to enter and they this-in enter and
 manu-we yitar. Gura burnga dodi nangume buntjil-buntjil-go
 neck-on put. And dilly-bag body his-on incomplete (broken)
 burngalngal gura yendu pita kambogo-we yitar. Murga
 pulls and another small one head-on places. Only
 dirainggur yendu-mun gumbi-ngo gamai-go mandendi, gari
 old men others-by string-only clay-only taken, not
 warka-nganu yimidir ngando-ngai. Gura ngando dana nangu
 altogether like women. And woman they her
 kundaiga, dana nangu gari gura kuli-dir. Dirlen dana
 having struck, they her no more angry-with. Therefore they
 ngando-ngai yimidir nganni kundal! Ngai! burla
 the women like this why strike! What a question! both
 danaigo ngamburgo gilgi mate-ga kaimbalmbate-ga
 before alive jealousy became-because quarreled-because
 kundandate-ga nangu muri-budo. Dana ngando-ngai
 struck-because her (they) forbade-indeed. They women
 namodir-ga-budo kundandal, dirainggur gabuba wabu-bakal
 that-for-indeed strike, old men too spear in the leg
 yimi-yimidir-gala diral bienega. Garko bama godera dadara
 just the same wife having died. By-and-bye men two go
 melbi-dir duyungu dauun-ngai dawinu-ngo. Gura burla
 message-with corpse-for friends call-to. And these two
 bobo yuba bama-dir-go wamega, burla dudun-be-go
 place close to men-with having approached, they the way-on
 gamai-ngu-nda dodi burlangan-go durnggalnggal. Garko
 clay-with body their-own smear. By-and-bye
 bama-gal gamai-tchir-go miraya, burlangan nadega
 men-before clay-with appear, them having seen
 gauwal-tchir-go bama yendu-me merelil. Garko burla yerluggargo
 scream-with men other-to tell. Then they separate
 dagaya garko burlangan bama nobun-il wamil melbi-dir.
 sit down then them man one approaches message-with.

Gura burla melbi nangun-gal meril-budo duyungu gabuba
 And they message him-before tell-indeed the dead also
 meril. Gura nulu melbi duyungu meril-budo.
 tell. And he message corpse-on account of tells indeed

Ngando-ngai melbi duyu-ngu nadega dana gauwaltchir-go

Women message corpse-of having heard they scream-with
 unggu batcheltchil gura dalmbakabalbaya bobo-we, gura
 weeping cry and throw themselves ground-on, and
 bama kaimbalmal. Dirainggur galmba unggu batchilil gura
 man blame. Old men also wailing cry and (but)
 gari gauwal-tchirgo galmba gari bama kaimbalmal unggu-we-go,
 not scream-with also not man blame crying,
 garko bera dana ganil-nda kaimbalmal makobadaigo.
 by-and-bye certainly they song-with blame always.

Gura dana wudur godera barbega gura dana kadara
 And they nights two having slept then they come
 duyu-ngu, dirainggur ngando-ngai galmba. Warka-ngamu
 the dead-for, old men women too. All collectively
 gari, mundal-go bera. Gura dana bobo yuba
 not, some certainly. And they place close to
 wamega duyu-dir-go danungun danangan damalmal
 having approached corpse-with friends their spear
 duyu-ngu. Gura ngandongai unggu-dir-go kadara.
 dead man-on account of. And women crying-with come.

Gura dana duyu yuba wamega dana nima-we unggu-dir-go
 And they corpse close having come they grave-at cry-with
 dagalgaya gura unggu batcheltchil, dir-ainggur galmba.
 sit down and wailing cry old men too.

Dauungun dirilen danangan ngan-ni damalmal? yimidir gura
 Friends therefore them why spear? Similarly also
 nulu danangan-gal netchin dadarai-ga gura bienega nulu
 he them-before always went-because and having died he
 dauun danangan kana-ngan-go gari wamega danangan
 friends their from the very first not having met them (he)
 dube-ga-budo. Namongu-budo dana yimidar damalmal.
 left-because-indeed. Therefore-indeed they like-this spear.

Gura dana duyu nima-we budur kundo-kundo bantchentchi
 And they corpse grave-in nights many attend on
 duyu kana kada manatinu. Duyu kana kada balkai-ga, bama
 corpse first foul to become. Corpse once foul made, man
 nobungo nulu warbi-dirgo dadara gurluggo bandinu
 one he tomahawk-with goes bark-trough to cut
 duyu-ngu. Gura nulu bandega gurluggo-dirgo kadara,
 corpse-for. And he having cut bark trough-with (he) comes,
 nulu gurabudo yoku-we bauwal ngara warnaganu-ngo dallel
 he again fire-in cooks bark to take off-for light
 gural. Gura ngolu kadaltchal gura pegur-nda
 makes. And crinkled extremity ties up and wooden peg-with

bakal gura bebir dia ngada-galbaiyo bakalkal
 pierces and edge holes knee-extended (*i.e.* in a line) digs
 gumbin birbanu-ngo. Gura gurlnggo gamai-nda
 string to wind on-for. And bark trough white-clay with
 durnggalnggal woba-n galuba durnggal gurnerngurnern
 smear red clay-with also smear piebald
 gural walu-budongo (w)unanu-ngo; ngunu-ngun
 (he) makes appearance-very become-to: the mother-by
 gumbin galbai-galbai wogurgur duyu kadanu-ngo. Daku
 string very long plaits corpse to tie up-for. Things
 namodir badatega dana gurabudo barbil.
 these finished they again sleep.

Dabadabaiga dana duyungu burntchirngaraya, duyu
 By sunrise they corpse-for will gather corpse
 warnaganu-ngo. Manu dirainggur bera ngandongai dana
 to take out-for. Only men of course women they
 nimawe ngudo-kadalmul dana netchin yerlmggar-go ninggal
 grave-in not-come they always separately sit
 nanggor daitchen-be gura ngamu yubaigo unnga
 camp freed from the 'tabu' and mother close by cry
 batchetchil ngambai-go. Gura dana duyu warnagalul
 wails closed (*i.e.* not taking notice). And they corpse take out
 gurlnggowe yitar-nungo. Gura dodu duyu-we dana
 trough put into-to. And body corpse-of they
 warka-ngamu-ngun gari karbal, murga dowe
 all collectively-by not hold, only wife's brother-in-law
 nangu-mun dodu nangu karbal, gura gurlnggo-we yitar,
 him-by body of him holds, and trough-in puts,
 kambogo galmba, mundal banggar nima-we-go dubil, gurlnggo
 head also, some flesh grave-in leaves, trough
 gayin kadai-ga. Gura dirainggur dana warka-ngamu nima-we
 full comes-because. And old men they altogether grave-to
 kadai, dana dumul nadinu-ngo nangu kanaigo ngambur-go
 having come, they splinter see-to him first (when) alive
 kundaiga, damaiga, bandega. Namu-ngango-gala dana dumul
 having struck, speared, cut. Therefrom-verity they splinter
 banggar nangu-me nadinu. Gura dana dumul nangu
 flesh his-in will see. And they splinter his
 nadega, garko wornda bobo-n kobarbil.
 having seen, then the empty (*i.e.* pretended) soil-in bury.
 Nayun badatega garko nulu gurabudo gurlnggo gumbin-il
 This finished then he again trough string-with
 wudyego kadaltchal. Nayun badatega, garko duyudirgo
 firmly ties. This completed, then corpse-with

gurlnggo mumbal gural gura yandal. Yandaiga namongango
 trough on-the-head makes and stands up. Having risen thence
 nulu dindal-budo-ngo dudara wauw-u-ngun nangu dirbaiga-budo
 he quick-very runs spirit-by him abducted-because
 duyu-dir-go. Gura nangu dauaigo kundai gurlnggo nawaigo
 corpse-with. And him once killed trough just there
 pulelil. Gura nulu gimil namalma nangu kundai-ga: gimil
 fallsdown. And he stick sees him killed-with: stick
 kana nadega nulu ngundu kadara duyudirgo. Gura bama
 once having seen he back comes corpse-with. And men
 warka-ngamu dana nangu nima-wego bantehentehi gura nulu
 altogether they him grave-at await and he
 danangan-gal kadaiga nulu gimil meril nangu
 them-to having come he stick shews him
 kundaiga: namongan-budo dana bama mala gural gura
 having killed-with: therefrom-indeed they man guilty declare and
 kaimbambal. Garko dana warkangamu nima-ngoal kadara
 blame. By and by they altogether grave-from come
 duyu-dirgo nanggor daitehen-be gura duyu melu-we
 corpe-with camp freed from 'tabu'-in and corpse shade-in
 yitar. Garko ngandongai kadara duyu-ngu ungga
 put. By-and-bye women come corpse-on account of a wailing
 batchinu-ngo gura dana ungga katabatega dana
 to cry for and they wailing having broken off they
 kadagai birbalbal bobo yendume dakatinu gura
 moveable-possessions gather place other-on to sit down and
 dana dadara. Dirainggur nobungo nawaigo naudaya nulu
 they go. Old man one there will remain he
 pirra-wego ninggalnggal watchi mala nadinu-ngo. Gura
 foliage-behind sits spirit guilty to see-for. And
 dana dadaiga wutchi-ngai wau-wu nganggoigo kadara nima gu,
 they having gone spirits breath quickly come grave-to
 unggadirgo, gau-wal-tchirgo, gamai-tchirgo, kalka-dirgo,
 wailing-with, screaming-with, clay-with, spear-with,
 millir-tchirgo, yoku-dir-go, diral-tchirgo, pitagur-tchirgo.
 wommera-with, wood-with, wives-with, children-with.

Gura nulu wauwu mala namalma nangu damanu gura nangu
 And he spirit guilty looks for him to spear and him
 nadega nulu nangu damanu. Gura nulu nangu damaiga
 having seen he him will-spear. And he him havingspeared
 dana gauwal-tchirgo gura numbur-tchirgo dudara gura
 they screaming-with and noise-with run away and
 bobo-we burnngalngga ya warimana ya-budo, gura danangan-ga
 ground-into enter will disappear-indeed, and them-from

bobo wudje-go nangarngaralaya gura nulu mala-n yoku
 earth vehemently will shake and he guilty-at wood
 mulbango karbalbal. Gura dana wauwu-ngai warimanati-
 firmly holds. And they spirits having disappeared-
 budo, bobo kana nangaren nulu yoku dubil gura kadara
 indeed, earth first shook he wood lets go and comes
 gura dirainggur-be melbi meril wutchi-ngai warka-ngamu
 and old men-to news tells spirits altogether
 wamega gura yendu damaiga nangaren-budo.
 having seen and one havingspeared (earth)having shaken-indeed.

Merelil gura dana wauwu nima-ngu kadarai: nayun
 (He) tells (them) also they spirits gsave-to came those (only)
 gari yendu: wauwu peba ngamu gura dauuu-gai danangan-
 not others; spirits father, mother and friends them-
 gala nulu nadetchi: gura nulu wauwu yendu damai
 indeed he saw: and he spirit another speared
 nayua dauun bama yendu-me. Gura dana kanaigo bama
 this one friend mea others-of. And they before men
 duyu bantchentchi gura bobo dubil. Ngando-ngai bobo nayun
 corpse waited at and place leave. Women place this
 gari-budondo wamiada, dudan namodir-be galmba gari
 not at all should come to, road the same-on also not
 kada-nda, purai galmba gari puda-nda bobo tabul-ngan.
 should travel, water also not should drink, place 'tabu'-with.
 Murga namo-dir tabul dirainggur pudaral: ngandongai
 Only there-with tabu old men drink: women
 pudanda danangan kundanda, dana namo-ngubudo yinil,
 would drink them would kill, they therefore-indeed fright,
 dana netchin dudan yendu-me dadara: murga dirainggur
 they always road other-on go: only old men
 dudan-go dadara. Gura duyu mokul matega kana, dana
 road-on go. And corpse old has become first, they
 moari guru walar duyu-wego wokelkil gura kadagai
 hair and beard corpse-on account of cut off and property
 nangu-nga bauwalal, gari warka-ngamu, mundal-go bera.
 his-of burn, not all together, some-only of course.
 Ngando-ngai galmba moari wokil. Moari kana wokega garko
 Women also hair cut. Hair once have cut then
 dana unggu batcheltchil warka-ngamu duyu-ngu. Gura
 they weeping cry all together the dead-for. And
 kabir-kabir belumayar-ngai dana yinil manaya, danangan
 girls widows they fright become, them
 manega-mu, dana moari wokega. Dana moari wokega dana
 would take, they hair having cut. They hair having cut they

galmba bama manana gura belumayar garka-ngun
 also men take and widow younger brother-by
 mana.
 taken.

The following is the free rendering of the foregoing :—

“Again, I will tell you about men’s burials. When a man dies, all the others set up a great crying and wailing. Especially do the deceased’s mother, elder and younger sister, father’s sister, mother’s mother and father’s mother lament very much. Furthermore, with their hands they violently beat their belly, lips, cheeks and head. And they get down on the ground here and there and throw themselves about, at the same time casting up soil with their hands and kicking the ground. And vehemently they blame the person or persons whom they consider are guilty of having killed him. The old men also cry very much but not as continuously as the women and they do not scold anyone as yet : neither do they throw themselves on the ground nor beat their body with their hands, nor do they blame anyone while crying : afterwards, of course, in a special kind of wail,²⁶ they cry and blame the man who is believed to be the cause of deceased’s death—this they do for a long time. When they have ceased crying they haste to get white clay to smear over their body. Only the dead man’s father and mother continue crying, and for them the others fetch clay, and they also smear it over their head and body. When one’s elder brother dies the younger one prepares to spear the wife of the deceased and pulls her about before the others—because of the man’s death : but one of them gets hold of the spear and prevents him wounding the woman.²⁷ At sundown they dig a grave²⁸ right in the centre of the camp, and cut long wooden sticks, to make a platform with, by putting them all in one line²⁹ and spreading grass over them. They also get some bark to cover this from above. After all that is done, they fetch the corpse. The deceased’s mother jumps crying into the grave, whilst the elder and younger sister, daughter, father’s mother and father, and father’s younger sister follow the corpse, they

²⁶ Ganil = a sort of plaintive burial song.

²⁷ The idea of this is to shew that during life, in their domestic quarrels, the wife may have occasionally got the better of the deal, and accordingly the surviving brother by attempting to spear her, shews that he is getting even with her.

²⁸ Face to the west, but reason for this observance is unknown, and a fire kept alight in the close vicinity.

²⁹ *Lil.*—like the knee extended.

also crying. In order to get the corpse into the grave, they have to ask the mother to step out. And when she has done so, they put in the corpse, cover it with bark, and then the whole with soil. Then the grave diggers as well as the women who had followed the corpse to the grave, commence to cry there again. Once the corpse is buried, some of the other women approach the grave for lamentation. And coming from all directions—east, west, south and north, they build a camp of considerable size around the grave, the corpse resting in the centre. Next day, the dead man's wife comes along crying, offering her head to all the men around to be struck; and they strike her too with a wommera until she is covered with blood. During the day, the women plait mourning strings³⁰ for the dead. This done, they smear a lot of stringing with clay and wind them around their necks and the two arm-pits: they tear up dilly-bags and pull them over their heads. These of course are plaited, only by the women, not by the men, but they give the bags to them to put on. The deceased's father also tears some up and makes an opening into them big enough to let his head go through and wears them round his neck: furthermore, he draws some all over his body, and a small one over his head (Pl. lxxviii, fig. 3). The other men only just use the strings [belts]³¹ or the white clay, not everything like the women.³² When the striking ceremony with the wife is over, they are no longer angry with her. But why do they hit the woman at all! What a question! Because when her husband was alive, they both had been jealous of each other, and had quarrelled and fought: this they could not approve of, and they therefore strike the woman just in the same way as the old men spear the husband in the leg after his wife's death.³³ By and bye, two of the men go off as messengers to invite the friends for the funeral, but before they get to the camp they smear their bodies with white clay and so put in an appearance: as soon as the people visited see them coming, they shout it out to all the others. Then the messengers separate, and sit apart at a distance from the camp, whence an individual will approach to hear what they have to say: they tell him all the news, also of the occurrence of the death: and the person who has approached passes on

³⁰ Described in Bull. 1—Sect. 12.

³¹ In the case of the males, who wear them around the waist, the mourning-belt is of a different pattern, and is described in Bull. 1—Sect. 15.

³² If bee's wax is available both male and female mourners will fix up their hair with it into thorns.

³³ *i.e.* to cry quits—see previous footnote.

the news (see Bull. 8—Sect. 8). When the women hear this message, they cry out and scream, throw themselves on the ground, and blame the individual whom they deem to have caused the death: the men also do a cry, but not so loud as the women, nor do they blame anyone while crying: but later on they always do so in a special kind of wail (= ganil). After two days they leave for the burial service, men and women, not all of them, but some. And when they get close to the place where the corpse is lying, the visitors, *i.e.* the deceased's friends, throw spears at them on the dead man's account. The women are crying all the way to the grave, at the side of which they sit down still crying, the men doing the same. But why do these visiting friends of the deceased throw spears at them? Because the dead man had always travelled with them, but had died among his own people without having been to see them (the visitors) for a long time previously, just as if he had left them altogether. This is the reason for the spear-throwing.³⁴ They then keep the corpse in the grave for many days until it gets putrid. Then one man goes away with a tomahawk to cut out the bark-trough to wrap the corpse in. This bark which he brings back with him, he puts in the fire to get the sap out so as to peel it better. Then he ties up the crinkled-extremities³⁵ of the trough, pierces them with a wooden pin, and in the same straight line pierces holes along the edges of the trough for the string to go through, from side to side when finally sewn up (Bull. 7, fig. 226). Then he smears it with white- and red-clay to make it look pie-bald and give it a nice appearance, while the mother of the deceased plaits a very long string to tie up the corpse with. When all that is finished, they pass another night over it. By sunrise they will assemble again on account of the corpse, to take it out of the grave, which of course is only done by the men. No women will then be at the grave. Separate from one another they now continue to sit in their camp, from which the 'tabu' has been removed, while the mother cries by herself not far away without taking notice of anything. And in the meantime they take the corpse out of the grave and put it in the bark trough. But no one touches the body except the wife's brother-in-law, *i.e.*, deceased's brother who

³⁴ In other words, although the deceased used to wander about, and be friendly with the visitors, he had not been to see them for a long time past, and accordingly his death could not be due to their agency: on the other hand, by throwing the spears at his own people, the visitors shew whom they consider responsible for it.

³⁵ Ngolu = front of the ankle which is always more or less wrinkled or creased.

opens it, etc. : he also wraps it up within the trough, including the head. Some of the flesh is left in the grave because of the trough being full. Now all the men come to the grave to find the 'splinter' which is believed to remain in the dead man's flesh, and with which he was struck, speared, or cut by the one who doomed him³⁶ while he was alive ; and when they find it, as they pretend to do, they bury it in the soil with the remains. After this, the brother ties up the corpse in the trough quite firmly, puts it on his head,³⁷ and stands up. Then he runs away from there as fast as he can, being dragged along by the corpse's spirit, and on the very spot where the man was originally doomed³⁸ the trough falls off. And he sees the stick with which the deceased had been doomed, and directly he sees it he brings it back with the corpse. All the others are waiting for him at the grave, and having joined them he shews them the stick. Thus they recognise the guilty man, *i.e.*, the owner of this stick, and are angry with him. By-and-bye they all leave the grave, and taking the trough to the camp from which the 'tabu' is now removed, put it in the shade. Then the women come forth again to cry over it, and when this is done they take up their moveable-possessions and shift their camp somewhere else. One old-man only remains there, hiding himself behind bushes in order to see the spirit³⁹ of the guilty one. And as soon as the others are gone the spirits quickly appear at the grave wailing and screaming, painted with white clay, carrying spears, wommeras, and pieces of wood, and also having their wives and children with them. But the watcher looks for the guilty one to spear him and does so when he sees him. Having speared him, the others run away screaming and rattling, disappearing into the ground. And through them the earth quakes violently but the one who spears the guilty individual holds firmly to the bushes. When the spirits are quite gone, and the earth has finished shaking, the old-man lets go his hold of the bushes, comes back and tells the others about his having closely seen all the spirits, about his spearing one of them, and about the earth shaking. The spirits that came to the grave were those of deceased's father and mother and friends, no others, and those only had he seen ; but the one he speared was another man's

³⁶ This idea of dooming, the presence of the splinter, etc., is explained fully in Bull. 5—Sect. 114.

³⁷ *Lit.*—makes it on-the-head.

³⁸ *Lit.*—struck.

³⁹ For a description of these 'wutchi,' etc., see Bull. 5—Sect. 116.

friend.⁴⁰ And those who had previously attended to the corpse now leave the locality where the flesh is buried in the ground. The women dare by no means go to the spot again or walk on the same road or even drink water from this place which is now 'tabu' except to the old men. If the women did so they would be killed by the deceased's spirits: that is what they are frightened of, and so they always take another road while the men follow the usual track. After some time when the corpse becomes old, the men cut off their hair and beard out of regard to the deceased, and burn some of his property, not all, but only some. The women also cut their hair⁴¹: this done, they all lament again over the dead. But what the girls and widows now have to fear is that some one might take them, now that their hair has been cut. For when their hair is cut men can take them to wife, and the widow is claimed by the deceased's younger brother."

The trough is carried about at least until the hair is cut, and finally buried somewhere in deceased's own country, hidden in a cave, or put under the ground: it is the mother or mother's sister who carries it about. The carrying about of the remains here is locally believed to be a sign of love and affection: were the survivors not to ensure its being properly carried out, it would look as if the deceased had had no friends among the tribe.

Old men and old women, so long as they are infirm, are buried straight away without any ceremony.

6. The Bloomfield River natives⁴² make a distinction in the final obsequies between those males who have passed their days in comparative peace and quiet and those who have rendered themselves unusually prominent.

In the case of any male who happens to have no powerful relatives, or who has never made himself conspicuous by any deeds of valour or prowess, and in the case of any female whatsoever—

⁴⁰ He thus confirms the guilt of the already suspected person who has been blamed, and who will sooner or later be made to pay the penalty, usually a life for a life.

⁴¹ The hair so cut from the mourners is rolled tightly round a stick, and placed upon the trough enclosing the deceased. No marriages amongst the relatives of the deceased are allowed to take place until the hair-cutting takes place.

⁴² I am indebted to Mr. R. Hislop, late of Wyalla, Bloomfield River, for much of this information.

directly such an one is dead, the body is wrapped up in a sheet of tea-tree bark, with the arms laid at the sides or crossed over the breast. It is thus kept for a few days until the relatives, for whom the messengers have been sent, can come up and view the body which is uncovered from its wrappings as occasion requires. Each night the body is mourned, the mourners covering themselves with pipe-clay or white mud—a ring of it around the women's faces in addition—and as often as not besmearing their bodies with the oily exudation from the corpse: whenever the latter custom is practised, they must not wash themselves until the stench has entirely disappeared, which it sometimes takes upwards of a couple of months to do.⁴³ In between the wailing and the crying, they will moan somewhat as follows "Oh, Brother (etc., as the case may be), how we used to go hunting the kangaroo," "how we used to" do this or that, recalling some familiar episode or adventure in connection with the deceased, "and now you have left me behind!" The body is at length buried during any time of the day, the place of burial being immaterial so long as it is away from the camping ground and remote from any particularly plentiful patch of food, because any such place of burial, and anything growing on it is 'tabu' to the women, not however to the men. The hole which is dug is about three by one-and-a-half feet at the surface, where it forms an oval, and about three feet in depth where it is larger by being made circular. While still wrapped in its bark-sheet, the corpse is doubled up both at the thighs and at the knees, coverings and all, so that the knees are in close apposition to the face, and the whole tilted in towards one or the other side: if the deceased has died away from his home he is placed in a position facing it, otherwise he is made to look towards the east. The grave is then filled up with earth, and sometimes a vertical blaze or cut of indeterminate shape is incised in the neighbouring trees.

When an aboriginal who has had plenty of friends or who has made a name for himself, at last closes his eyes in death, there is a greater amount of mourning, and steps are taken to discover the murderer who doomed him, then to punish him. Having been wrapped in bark, the corpse is laid in a trench not more than a foot deep, and covered with earth, while at the same time an ordinary black's hut is built over the site: in this hut, the chief mourners have to temporarily reside and hence its size will depend upon the number of people it has to accommodate. When all his friends, relatives, and other visitors have at last been

⁴³ Note that on the Pennefather River the vital principle may be connected with the sense of smell (Bull. 5 Sect. 68).

gathered together, and this may take several days, the grass-covering of the hut is removed, but the frame-work allowed to stand. Certain of the old men and the dead man's nearest relatives—and there are here reckoned to be his group-mother's or blood mother's brothers—next dig him up, lay him on the flat, and carefully examine for any bruises or marks of external violence, and consult as to those that may be accounted for, and those that may be laid at the door of some enemy. They next start removing the whole of the outer skin, commencing operations by pressing with the ball of the thumb and so peeling off the cuticle with its colouring matter and leaving behind a comparatively pale surface. Another examination is now made for any marks of violence, and of course certain bruises are invariably discovered. Then follow two vertical cuts, one on either side close to the spine, cutting through the proximal ends of the ribs and so removing the whole of the head and back-bone in one piece: a view is thus obtained from behind into the thoracic and abdominal cavities with the object of obtaining any additional confirmatory clues as to the cause of death, which are always forthcoming in the shape of a wooden splinter, spear-tip, etc. Finally, the whole of the left upper extremity, including the shoulder-blade, and left lower extremity, minus the pelvis, are removed, and together with the head and back-bone sewn up in a bark trough of the pleat-type⁴⁴: this trough is taken charge of by the mother or mothers during the day, but by a blood- or group-brother at night, when it is often utilised as a pillow. On top of this pillow are placed portions of the deceased's hair which will subsequently be worked up with fibre-twine to make mourning strings. The whole of the remainder of the corpse is then either re-interred in the same hole which it had previously occupied, but now made deeper, or else occasionally cremated.

After various deliberations, the old men, relatives and friends of the deceased, come to an unanimous conclusion as to the ownership of the wooden splinter, spear-tip, etc., that is alleged to have been removed from the inside of the corpse: the ownership is practically always tacked on to some individual, resident or stranger, who happens to have no powerful friends or who may have the reputation of making himself generally objectionable all round. Of course the accused indignantly denies the charge, and argues to shew that he had always been on amicable terms with the deceased, that they had often gone out hunting together, that

⁴⁴ Bull. 7—Sect. 58, and figs. 223 and 226.

they had never had any quarrel, and finishes by trying to shift the blame on to somebody else : his efforts in this direction may prove successful or not. At any rate, some one is fixed upon, guilty or not, who recognising it to be a case of "needs must when the devil drives" offers expiation⁴⁵ by challenging his accusers to spear him. Two of his mother's brothers, or, if these are not handy, two of his own brothers, standing on either side are allowed to lend assistance, their weapons of defence however being only three wommeras, one apiece. The first whom the accused challenges is usually the deceased's mother's-brother, then come the brothers, friends, etc., though in the excitement of the moment some two or three will rush up to a distance of some ten or twelve yards or so, and simultaneously let fly their spears at him. The alleged culprit, notwithstanding the immense mental and physical strain, may thus, with the help of his two friends, succeed in escaping any serious effects from the thirty or forty spears which have been thrown during the good hour and more that he has exposed himself. Should he come through the ordeal successfully, and a lot depends upon his previous conduct and the influence of powerful friends, his accusers will ultimately run up and cling round his neck, indulge in a certain amount of weeping, all make friends again, and finally fix the guilt a second time, generally upon the weakest tribe and its most friendless member. In this district, some one *must* be killed for the death of every "important" male aboriginal. The bark-trough containing the remnants of the corpse is now carried about from camp to camp by one of the brothers : it is supported on his head with a pad, and may go on its peregrinations for from two to three months, a renewed wailing taking place at each fresh camping-ground. Every now and again, just about dusk, the brother with one or two friends makes a circuit of a mile or so with the remains round the camp, and so soon as they can assure themselves that they hear the bones rattle⁴⁶ as the package is jogged along, they know that they are in the neighbourhood of the alleged murderer. In this Bloomfield River District, the Bannabilla natives at the mouth of the river are deemed to be the weakest and most friendless, and one of this tribe is generally, as a last resource, fixed upon as the culprit : the latter is enticed away on some hunting expedition, for a corroboree, etc. and then mercilessly speared from behind. The bark-trough with its contents is not necessarily buried immediately

⁴⁵ Bull. 8—Sect. 13.

⁴⁶ Needless to say, these are made to rattle when the suitable opportunity offers.

after vengeance has been taken, but is often carried about until such time as one of the deceased hero's mothers, brothers, or sons happen to die. The immediate relatives do not cut their hair until all the ceremonies are completed.

⁷ 7. Amongst the Lower Tully River⁴⁷ natives, friends and relatives attend upon the sick person until the last moment, and immediately after death tie him or her up with lawyer-cane, a procedure in which all assist; the tying-up position is with the flats of the hands in close apposition, either pressed closed to one side of the head, or else passed forward between the two shins



Fig. 56.



Fig. 57.

(figs. 56, 57). The body is either buried or burned, there being nothing to choose between these methods, and if cremation is fixed upon, the burning may be either immediate or subsequent; occasionally it may be desiccated. The tied-up body may be kept for two or three days before actual burying, etc., especially if the deceased had been a favourite, and portions of it may now be eaten, amongst other reasons, in order to give cause for fight and quarrel at the *Prun-ground*.⁴⁸ While thus awaiting burial, etc., it is not removed from the hut in which it has been placed, but is visited all night, relay upon relay of men and women indiscriminately, taking it turn about to do the howling and wailing.⁴⁹ In close proximity to the hut, the mourners may be seen squatting in groups, two three, or four individuals together, with arms around each other's neck or shoulders, heads all turned down and towards each other, bodies swaying from side to side, and all bemoaning and crying.

⁴⁷ Mr. E. Brook, Junr. very kindly acted as interpreter for me here.

⁴⁸ Bull. 4—Sect. 15.

⁴⁹ The blacks here are in no sense frightened at the presence of a corpse: it is the spirit, etc., after the burial or cremation that they have a dread of.

At intervals they go to view the corpse, and "kiss" it with a blowing sound on the forehead or cheek. The body is usually carried from the hut to its ultimate destination on a man's head, and the hut subsequently burnt or otherwise destroyed: it may however be slung lengthwise on a pole and so borne between two men. The place of burial or cremation is never out in the open plain, always in some shady spot on the edge of the river-bank or dense scrub. There would appear to be no special burial ornaments, though as signs of love and affection in order to keep the deceased in remembrance⁵⁰—not necessarily by implication as signs of mourning—there are a few facts to be noted. Thus, after any cremation, the female relatives, generally the neices on either side, look out for the teeth and wear them after the manner of a forehead fringe, each tooth attached by a blob of wax to tufts of the frontal hair. If a child dies at or soon after birth, the navel-string is cut off and worn as a necklace by the mother.⁵¹

With ground-burial, the body, having been tied up in position as already described, is ready for the grave. This may be shallow and longitudinal, or vertical and deep: in the former case, the corpse is always laid on its side, with the head in any direction, whereas in the latter it is put down feet first, *i.e.* in a sitting posture, the whole being then filled in with earth and built up a bit, with bushes and grass placed on top. The bones, whether of males or females, may subsequently be removed from these graves, painted with red ochre and so carried about in the dilly-bag by the friends and relatives who every now and again may be seen crying and wailing over them. Thus in one of the local camps I observed three or four people squatting in a circle and wailing over the bones lying in their midst, talking as it were to the skull strung on a twine which was handed in turn from one to the other; they expressed themselves somewhat as follows—"How we miss you!", "We used often to hunt together," "We remember when Koi"⁵² went away," etc.

Cremation is accompanied with ceremonial only when the social status of the deceased warrants it. With any ordinary mortal the body in the tied position is carried on the bearer's head and thrown on to a specially prepared pyre, from out of the ashes of

⁵⁰ This is the nearest translation that could be made of the sentiment which the natives themselves described to me.

⁵¹ In the Atherton Scrub, I have seen a mother thus wearing the heart of her dead infant.

⁵² Bull. 5—Sect. 65.

which the female relatives may subsequently pick some of the calcined bones, teeth, etc., as already mentioned, though this practice is not an essential. The cremation may take place during any part of the day. The deceased's bark blanket and personal knick-knacks being burnt at the same time, though as a rule, the latter, especially his necklet, will go to the widow: his fighting weapons become the property of his younger brothers. In the case of certain "virile," specially distinguished and respected men, some very complicated customs are associated with their cremation, as follows. To start with, a corpse under such circumstances is



Fig. 58.

not tied up, but kept for some days until well swollen up, when it is carried down to the water where all its outer skin and hair is washed and rubbed off, and its hands tied together. The site for its ultimate cremation having been selected, one of the old men, chosen for the occasion, carries the corpse over his shoulders, like a "pick-a-back" baby, its legs dangling over his chest, its arms fixed by its tied hands over his forehead, and its head swaying from side to side (fig. 58), it is thus born in front of the procession, men and women advancing in indian file, but all silent. On arrival at the spot chosen (fig. 59), the body is placed on the ground and made to assume the squatting position (fig. 59c), propped up against the butt of a tree, and there it remains watching all the subsequent proceedings until late in the afternoon.⁵⁸ In the meantime,

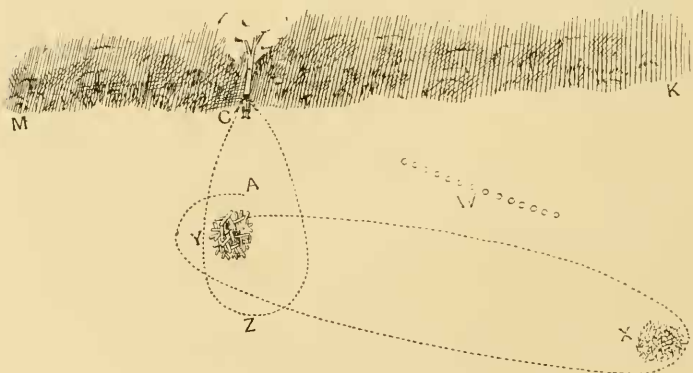


Fig. 59.

⁵⁸ The natives informed me that the body was purposely so placed so that it could see everything.

those who had followed it to its present resting place commence collecting firewood, the men gathering big pieces of timber, and the women little ones: the larger sticks are placed on the spot where ultimately required for the cremation (fig. 59y) while the smaller ones are gathered together in a heap about twenty yards distant (fig. 59x). The women now take themselves to the left hand side of the corpse and squat side by side all in one straight row (fig. 59w): their business is to cry, to strike their forks⁵⁴ and assist in the singing. The men collect together close to the heap of bigger faggots, between it and the dead body (fig. 59a), and advance in indian file behind the same old gentleman who carried the corpse to its present resting place, and who now marches at the head of the procession: it is he who leads the song in which the others join, but he alone keeps the time with the sounding-sticks⁵⁵, stamping his foot at each beat as he slowly comes forward, the others following and keeping exact step with him. The song which is sung over and over again all the way, and while the sticks are sounded is—"Yakai! ngaja winjiri winje ngenuna chainban, kuna pundili warre-marigo."⁵⁶ The route taken is towards and around the pile of smaller sticks, and as each individual passes it he picks up a twig with his left foot, and hopping on his right, to the beating of the time gets back to whence he started, the circuit enclosing the two heaps of faggots being completed: each now takes the twig from his left foot with his hand, and places it on top of the pile of big timber. Collecting again at the same spot, another start is made, the same performance gone through, and circuit after circuit completed until the whole heap of smaller sticks is removed by foot. I was informed that if the men were to touch with their hands any of the small bits of wood, before arriving at where the big faggots are heaped, they would get sores on their hands, and what is more important, the timber would not burn properly when lighted. The second heap having been thus cleared away, the old corpse bearer accompanied by the men walks close up to the dead body, upon which they next all turn their backs and retire to a spot about thirty feet distant. They all now re-approach the body simultaneously in rows of twos or threes, one solitary gin, not necessarily a relative, bringing up the rear, and all of them singing and repeating the song already mentioned.

⁵⁴ Bull. 4—Sect. 29 (e).

⁵⁵ Bull. 4—Sect. 29 (f).

⁵⁶ *Lit.* = "Alas! I wonder where he (*i.e.* Koi, Bull. 5—Sect. 65) met you! We will take your guts out and see."

The men do not come forward in ordinary walking gait, but each has his hands on his hips, thighs separated, with an inward movement of the knees at each advancing jerk of the body all done to the time kept by the old gentleman's sounding-sticks, and the old woman's clapping of the flats of the hands held well in front of her. This procession may thus advance and retire in broken order, some two or three times. The same old man as before now carries the corpse in the manner already described, and, in company with three or four of the men and the gin, makes the circuit of the timber-heap a few times (fig. 59z), and then drops his burden at the same tree-butt that he started from. Finally, the corpse is removed to a spot on the further side of the edge of the scrub (fig. 59m), three men only accompanying its bearer, the other males having joined the row of women with whom they are now squatting, the females alone beating time to the singing of the same old song. Having reached its new destination, the corpse is laid on its back, and awaits the setting of the sun. As soon as this is half way over the horizon, another old individual, usually a Kobi, or "medicine-man," sits astride the dead body, towards its head, and makes the following incisions: one, right across the top of the belly, and one down each extremity of that incision, so as to allow of the flap of skin being turned downwards. He removes the stomach only, wraps it up in the deceased's bark-blanket, and holding it in front of him crouches along as he makes his next move to the near side of the edge of the scrub right in front, and in close view of the group of assembled men and women squatting in their original places (fig. 59k). I use the term "crouches" purposely, because, as the old man passes along, he looks suspiciously on either side and over his shoulders, as if he were being watched by, or was watching for, something of which he was terribly afraid. The interpretation of such action on his part is that Koi²⁷ might come and do to him what he has done to the deceased, *i.e.*, taken the vital principle, breath, etc. away: he accordingly keeps watching to see that his three companions are closely following, because this spirit can only harm him when alone by himself. All four move along in quick time, stamping in step to the sounding-sticks which his three companions carry, and as soon as the spot fixed upon is reached, the bundle is placed on the ground and the old man left alone with it. No one actually sees what he next does, but it is firmly believed that he cuts open the paunch and finds the "rope," "something,"

²⁷ Bull. 5 Sect. 65, 116.

etc.⁵⁸ that the deceased has been doomed with, and which he buries separately to prevent its returning and giving the tribe trouble. He is thus able to understand the cause of death and to discover the guilty party. After the burial of this "something," etc. he rejoins the others and all now proceed to the corpse over which they have a good cry, it being finally carried by the same old man who did the post-mortem on to the funeral pyre, already lighted, and there left to be consumed. And while the fire burns, the widow will advance along the edge of the scrub in the direction of where the sun has just set, waving bushes which she holds in front of her, and sweeping them outwards: with her feet she takes a side-step or two alternately to left and right, the gentle swaying of her limbs and body constituting a most graceful and pleasing movement. With the sweeping of the bushes, she is supposed to drive away the Koi of her late husband. At the next *Prun*⁵⁹, the guilty party is charged with the offence, and has to answer for it in the usual manner. Dessication is a form of disposal of the dead practised only in the case of very distinguished males, indeed for such as would be considered worthy of cremation with ceremonial: after being disembowelled and dried by fire on a grid or platform, the corpse is tied up and carried about for months.

8. On the Russell River, this desiccation process appears to be highly developed, the "mummy" being ornamented (Pls. lxxi., lxxii.).

9. In the Boulia District⁶⁰ when an individual, male or female, dies, some bushes are heaped over a net spread out upon the ground, and on these the extended body is laid, the arms lying at the sides or down the front. Generally with a spear, the net is fixed lengthways above, so as to enclose the corpse in a sort of net-sheet. Two or three men, side by side, carry the body resting crossways on their heads, the whole of the camp accompanying them to the burial place. A grave having been dug, the body is laid in horizontally, face up, with the head pointing to the north, which is considered the orthodox position: the depth of the grave

⁵⁸ Bull. 5—Sect. 114.

⁵⁹ Bull. 4—Sect. 15.

⁶⁰ The account of the disposal of the dead in the Boulia, Cloncurry, and Upper Georgina Districts is extracted and revised from my "Ethnological Studies," etc., published in 1897; comparatively very few natives are now to be met with in these areas, those that survive being more or less contaminated with civilisation.

appears to vary with the nature of the soil, but about four feet is the average, though this is often exceeded. The corpse is next covered with logs placed longitudinally, then with a layer placed transversely, to be followed with a filling in of earth and soil : on top of all this are placed heavy logs and bushes, perhaps some heavy stones, all closely interlaced, and reaching to a height of from three to four feet above the adjacent surface which is cleared to a distance of a few feet all the way round.⁶¹ The boomerangs, spears, etc. belonging to the deceased are either buried with him, destroyed by fire, or more rarely distributed amongst his brothers while his name ceases to be mentioned. Burial follows almost immediately upon death taking place though if the closing scene occurs at night it is not carried out until early dawn. The corpse is in no ways decorated or painted. At the grave, and while it is being dug, in the midst of the weeping and the wailing, the woman will cut themselves with stone or glass down the outer and anterior aspects of the thighs, in numerous more or less parallel superficial incisions : previous to the cutting, and possibly with the idea of making the wound all the more painful, the Glenormiston women have been known to wash their thighs with their urine. These signs of mourning with the females have their counterpart among certain of the male relatives at Carlo, Glenormiston, Herbert Downs, and Roxburg Downs, but apparently not at Boulia, who make a single large and much deeper crucial incision on the corresponding portion of the thigh. The actual burial being completed, all return with many a sob and tear to the camp where they plaster their heads with blobs of "parta" (PPT), or gypsum, causing the whole head of hair at a distance to appear one mass of white (Pl. lxxiii., fig. 1) : owing to such fixing-up with this material, a mourner is spoken of as "parta-maró," *i.e.* plaster-potter. In any camp uncontaminated and away from the settlements, this plastering is adopted by all, whether the deceased be man, woman or child, though it is worn longer by the nearer relatives, *i.e.* the widow or widower, blood-brothers and -sisters. It is these nearer relatives, and they only, who in addition, colour-grease themselves down as far as the waist, both back and front, with red and yellow ochre in patterns varying with the sexes, and wear an opossum-string armlet : in the case of a young child deceased, no painting would be adopted by anyone. Exclusive of the nearer relatives, in addition to the gypsum, or more usually

⁶¹ In the Pitta Pitta language of Boulia, a grave is called mur-ra Kambo (=stick stone).

when its supply runs short, greased ashes or mud by itself may be smeared over the whole body as external emblems of grief. Crying and weeping is repeated nightly for a week or two, especially by the nearer relatives who may repair to the grave for the purpose, the sisters continuing when the brothers cease; they generally go in parties being afraid to go singly on account of the deceased's ghost, spirit, etc. Food, pituri, tobacco, etc., may be left regularly at the graveside, and the corpse openly informed to that effect. If the individual who doomed, pointed the bone, etc.,⁶² at the deceased has been recognised before the death took place, his identity would be confirmed, or otherwise discovered here by the tracks from the spirit, etc., at the grave. When an individual has been killed by the whole tribe collectively, *i.e.*, in punishment for some serious crime, he is usually made to dig his own grave, which is subsequently closed in similar manner except that the boomerangs, etc., with which he has been done to death are substituted for the long logs immediately covering the corpse; when, as in cases of murder, the assassin has been caught red-handed, the slayer and slain are buried together in the same grave previously dug by the survivor. In time of open hostilities, those who are killed are left on the field by their enemies, with broken spear or boomerang close beside to show the passing wayfarer how the individuals in question met their death.

10. In the Cloncurry District among the Maitakudi, the corpse is usually buried in a crouching position with head down, enclosed in a net perhaps, then covered with some tea-tree bark, and the earth thrown on top: no logs or sticks are piled up above, but the ground is smoothed to the level of the surrounding surface and a more or less circular area cleaned up. When night falls, a fire is lighted at a few yards distant from the grave, and some meat, etc., hung up on a neighbouring tree: this may be repeated for three or four nights following, and occasionally now and again during the next few months, until it is believed that the deceased "has got too old, has gone away somewhere else." In the olden days the women used to wear the gypsum as a sign of mourning, but nowadays both sexes only besmear themselves with mud, or else paint themselves red as far down as the waist; incisions used also to be made along the fronts of the thighs, several small superficial ones on the women, and two or three deep ones on the men. Where no visible or otherwise intelligible cause of death presents itself, one of the medicine-men will find out whether this

⁶² Bull. 5—Sect. 144.

is due to Malkari,⁶³ or his counterpart, who in this country, is believed to kill blacks, or to some human enemy with the mangai⁶⁴: in the latter case he would make believe that he had picked up the particular incriminating gew-gaw in the neighbourhood of the grave, and accuse some individual of having committed the crime. In other cases, the near relatives of the deceased may learn something for themselves by sticking upright a small forked stick on the grave itself, and placing on it a manda-kuya⁶⁵; this is done at night, and if on the following morning this amulet has fallen down, it is proof positive that the late lamented has met his death at the hands of an enemy "from a long way country."

11. In the Upper Georgina District, along the river from Cavandotta upwards, tree-burial is practised. A sort of platform of logs is built in the tree about ten or twelve feet from the ground, and upon this, wrapped in its net, etc., the corpse is laid: various sticks and bushes are placed on top, and in and among them the deceased's possessions may be enclosed. The body is usually laid with the head in the direction of the north or north-east. Among the Yaro-inga, between Urandungie and Headingley, I was informed by members of the tribe that, in the special cases of important personages, when all the flesh is rotted off, the bones may be removed and buried in the ground, with nothing on the surface to indicate their presence beneath. In the neighbourhood of Camoowal, I have seen the body of a dog buried up in a tree in exactly the same manner as a human corpse. Gypsum in this district is also used as a sign of mourning: the same material prevails also in the Leichhardt-Selwyn District, though the Kal-kaduns use red and yellow paint in addition.

12. To return to the eastern coast-line, when any ordinary adult male died at Torilla or Pine Mountain⁶⁶, his big toes as well as his legs were bound together. His wife and blood-relatives stayed in camp where they moaned and wept, cutting their heads with tomahawks and beating themselves with sticks and shields, while other blacks would remove the corpse to a spot about half a mile away, dig a shallow grave, and scatter the excavated soil to a distance of a few feet all the way round. The body was next laid in the grave and covered over with logs, sticks, etc., but no soil, that which was excavated being carefully smoothed over.

⁶³ Bull. 5—Sect. 118.

⁶⁴ Bull. 5—Sect. 144.

⁶⁵ Bull. 5—Sect. 154.

⁶⁶ Information given by Mr. W. H. Flowers, late of Torilla.

Next morning, this smooth loose soil round the grave would be carefully examined for any tracks, for it was firmly believed that the individual who had murdered or otherwise doomed the deceased would be certain to visit the victim's place of burial, and so be identified. Three or four days later portions of the flesh would be cut away and put into small dilly-bags, which were together tied up in a bundle and carried about by the widow or mother for months, from six to twelve, until such time as the bones were disinterred, when they were all passed through a more or less triangular aperture cut in a hollow tree. If the deceased had been a great warrior, his body, previous to the ground-burial, would be placed on a stage about six feet high for some few days' during which period the young men would go underneath to collect the drippings which would then be carefully rubbed into their skins: occasionally the kidney fat would be removed and used in similar fashion. With women, no trouble appears to have been taken: they were just wrapped in bark, put in a shallow grave lined below with long saplings, covered with earth, saplings again, and left there. When little children died, their bodies were kept whole in camp until tree-buried. Mourning was in all cases maintained until the final tree-burial, and in the case of a married man's death, the widow had to remain in camp throughout all this period, only after which was she allowed to re-marry. With very slight variations, the description of the disposal of the dead at Torilla and Pine Mountain holds good for the whole coastline from the neighbourhood of Mackay to Broadsound, Rockhampton, including the Keppel Islands, down to certainly Miriam Vale, though naturally such practices with closer European settlement, etc., are rapidly dying out if not already extinct. Throughout the tract of country under consideration, I had several opportunities during 1897 of examining the empty graves as well as the bones, almost invariably male adult, hidden in the neighbouring trees. The apertures in these hollow butts—more or less mitre-form, though with age and growth of the bark they become rather oval (Pl. lxxiv.)—are from twelve to twenty-two inches long by five to seven inches wide, cut at a height of from four to six feet from the ground, and closed from within either with grass, sticks, or bark: they are said to have been painted around in red and white, zig-zag fashion. At that time also I heard frequent mention of the scaffoldings that had been noticed at Yeppoon, Mt. Hedlow, and elsewhere, but which even then were things of the past. At Miriam Vale⁶⁷ the platform was formed of a few sheets of bark

⁶⁷ The description of the burial ceremony here was given me by the late Mr. E. C. Roe.

resting on cross-pieces supported on the forked extremities of posts some ten or twelve feet high fixed firmly into the ground. The corpse previously stabbed in the loins, from which the putrid matter subsequently trickled out, was laid upon this platform face upwards : it swelled a good deal for the next few days but soon became sun-dried, and was then left totally exposed for from three to five months according to the state of the season. Without any intermediate ground-burial, it would now be taken down and squeezed head foremost through the aperture cut for it in the hollow tree chosen. Previous to the exposure on the platform, the hands and feet of the deceased would occasionally be eaten, and especially would this be the case with one killed in tribal warfare. Females used to be ground-buried straight away after death, and left there, though now and again a woman's corpse, wrapped up in bark, would be seen carried around for months from camp to camp, though with what object is now unknown.

At Rockhampton and at Broadsound, when an infant died, the mother would tie up one or both of the dried tiny hands in a dilly-bag and carry it about with her long after the burial had taken place. On the Keppel Islands⁶⁸ in addition to tree-butt burial, rock-shelter graves were employed, the front lower edges of such shelters being ledged in with small pieces of rock. In one of such caves, on North Keppel, well-hidden from cursory observation by growing brush-wood, in a space about four and a half feet wide, and three feet from front to back, I found the closely packed remains of at least eight adults and two infants : the latter were enveloped in bark contained each within a dilly-bag, while the bones of the adults, except the crania and maxillæ, which had been left exposed and separate, were wrapped up in a fishing-net. Scattered here and there among the debris and sand were dolls⁶⁹. On this same North Island I also came across a dilly-bag, containing the remains of a piccaninny wrapped up in bark, hung up with twine from a tree branch. Some of the inhabitants of the smaller islands about Broadsound are said⁷⁰ to have taken their dead out to sea in a canoe and thrown them over-board.

13. Amongst the Brisbane District blacks, variations in burial customs⁷¹ depended upon whether the deceased were adults or

⁶⁸ Now (1906) devoid of natives.

⁶⁹ Bull. 4—Sect. 11 (*b*).

⁷⁰ On the authority of Mr. W. H. Flowers, late of Torilla.

⁷¹ The above particulars were taken down between 1900 and 1902 in the course of conversations with Mr. Tom Petrie. There is now no survivor of the Brisbane blacks.

children, male or female, deformed or not, etc. Wherever a black died or was eaten, the trees in close proximity were nicked around.

In the case of adults, immediately after death, some old "medicine man" not necessarily a relative would cut off the whole genitalia if a male, the clitoris only if a female, wrap them up in grass and place them high up in the fork of a tree: this was signficatory of the sexual instinct being finished with, and to prevent the spirit (nguru) of the dead entering into sexual relations with the living. The next process depended upon whether the corpse was to be eaten or not: it was eaten if deceased was a well-known warrior, a medicine-man, a man or woman killed in fight, or a woman dying suddenly in good condition.

If determined on eating the body, it was immediately carried, legs foremost, on the shoulders of two or three old men to a distance of half or three-quarters of a mile from the camp, which was thereupon shifted, the men, women and children following. When a big fire had been made, the body was laid face downwards on a large sheet of tea-tree bark lying alongside. The others squatted in groups in a circle all round the deceased, a few yards distant, each with its own fire. One "medicine-man" now took the sap-wood of an old tree, a piece about a foot long and three or four inches wide, got it well lighted, removed the burning cinders, and while still glowing, applied it all over the corpse, except the head, thus singeing off every vestige of hair (except of course that of the scalp hair and beard) and causing the flesh to turn a kind of light brown colour; he then rubbed the whole body over with his hand, thus removing all the burnt shreds of outer skin and hair particles. Standing about one hundred yards away were three other "doctors" each holding a stone knife in his mouth: one of them would advance singing, the knife now held in his hand, pass through the circle of scattered groups, and reach the corpse. If the corpse was that of a male, it lay on its stomach. The newcomer after making a median incision right through the skin from top of the head, along the neck, right down the middle of the back as far as the anus, would then retire to join the groups around; the second "medicine-man" would advance in similar fashion and incise, from the median cut just made, across the shoulders down the middle of the backs of the arm, fore-arm, and hand as far as the knuckles, and similarly retire; he would be succeeded by the third doctor who cut from the extremity of the median incision, down along the middle of the buttock, and back of each thigh, leg, and heel. If the corpse was that of a female, it lay on its back, the three incisions being correspondingly made on the front: median, from the top of the head right through the middle of the nose and face, down the

neck, chest, and belly as far as the fork : the second, from the neck down to the fronts of the upper extremities as far as the tips of the palms : the third, from the fork down the fronts of the thighs and legs as far as the insteps. Two of the doctors next commenced to get off the skin along these incisions, removing it in one piece with attached toes, fingers, ears, etc., and then to stick it up on spears to dry before the fire. The body after its entrails, heart and lungs had been removed, was next cut up by the doctors and carefully disjointed, its different portions being indiscriminately shared by themselves and the people around among whom they were thrown.

The old and young alike of both sexes partook of it after roasting, the pelvis, skull, jaw and bones of both limbs being previously removed from the portions so distributed, and put aside : it was only the back-bone together with the ribs and attached meat that were thrown into the fire and so destroyed. The sentiment which prompted this eating of the deceased was a double one : the survivors knew where the dead actually were and so could not be frightened by their spirits, while the disposal of the corpse in this manner prevented its going bad and stinking. The liver was eaten, but the entrails, heart and lungs buried, the spot being marked by three sticks about a foot high, each wound round with grass-rope, and stuck closely apposed into the ground. When the bones, which had been put aside, had been cleaned of all their flesh and brought by the deceased's mother, widow or sister (in order of preference) back to camp, one of these women would take the whole pelvis,⁷² put it on a log, and start striking it with a sharp tomahawk-stone, taking care that when a crack should at last be heard, the name of some individual in particular⁷³ should be mentioned. She would then recommence the hammering, so arranging matters that when the crack again took place, the same name would be repeated. And the old men would say "Ku-ré ! Ku-ré !",⁷⁴ and thus accept the proof that the person mentioned was actually the one implicated : so much so, that when met with, the latter would be put to death, usually by sneaking upon him at night-time. After the deceased's skin had been thoroughly dried, it was covered with charcoal and grease, folded up and carried, together with the bones in a dilly-bag by the mother, widow or sister, who would cry over it for some ten minutes or so regularly at night and

⁷² A thigh-bone was struck to similar purpose.

⁷³ This was usually some member of another tribe on whom they had a special "down."

⁷⁴ An expression of astonishment, wonder

at early day break. Portions of it, *e.g.*, chest and back where the scars were, were given to the women friends of another tribe, who when they got back to their camps, would start another crying match over them on their own account. This giving of the skins to women of another tribe denoted that these women's husbands and their friends were not considered the guilty parties: it was a sort of confidential tip that they were not suspected and might in perfect safety come to visit the tribesmen of the person deceased.⁷⁵ After the remaining skin, with the bones, had been carried about by the women already particularised, for some two or three months, or until such time as another corpse had to be similarly treated, the dilly-bag was finally slung up on top of a forked stick stuck upright within a hollow tree.⁷⁶ Several of such bags might be placed in the same tree which was considered "dimanggali," *i.e.* tabu.

Tree-burial without eating was the method of disposal in the case of any ordinary male mortals, and all women except those killed in fight or who had died suddenly in good condition. After removal of the genitalia as before mentioned, the body was wrapped round in a sheet of bark, tied tightly round beyond the head, and bound carefully round and round with wattle-bark, only



Fig. 60.

the tips of the toes being left exposed. It was carried feet-foremost on the shoulders of two men to some gully or out-of-the-way place in which they never hunted (if on the coast, to one of the mangrove islands) where a tree with suitable fork, *i.e.* six or seven feet off the ground, was chosen. Two forked sticks were next cut and fixed upright about seven feet from the tree, and a platform erected (fig. 60), but in such a way that when the body was resting on it, with head next the tree, the feet were always towards the west. Under this platform a circular space of about four feet diameter was cleared, and here a small fire was made, with the deceased's spear and waddy (if a male) or digging-stick (if a female) stuck in the ground: the deceased's spirit was thus enabled to go about and hunt at night, and also cook his or her

⁷⁵ This explained how Mr. Tom Petrie was received so well by tribes beyond the Turrbal boundaries, when they knew that he had been given portions of the skin of Yabba's son, a well known and respected Brisbane character.

⁷⁶ In neighbouring tribes, a shelter-cave now and again replaced the hollow tree.

food. Next day, two of the old women—mother, widow, or sister—would go out to the resting place, recognise the imprint of a human foot⁷⁷ close to the fire, arrange between themselves to fix the guilt on a darkie of another tribe whose foot-print they would declare it to be, and, returning to camp, spread the information thus obtained. During the crying at night and at daybreak the alleged culprit would be cursed and sworn at by the relatives and friends with such epithets as “big head,” “big belly,” “crooked leg,” etc., and threatened with what would be done to him when caught. Two or three months later, when the body had rotted, it was taken down by two of the old women, opened out, the skull, jaw, pelvis and limb-bones cleaned up and rubbed with charcoal, while the remainder of the corpse, including the bones of the toes, fingers, ribs, and back-bone, was burnt. Having brought the bones in a dilly-bag back to camp, a fire was made at about one hundred yards distant, and hither the whole company present, including the two women, proceeded. The mother, widow, or sister of the deceased then started hammering away at the pelvis, etc., as before, making it crack when mentioning the name of the person whose foot-print had been originally detected, and thus confirming the evidence of accused’s guilt, the latter being accordingly put to death at first opportunity.

Deformed people, after their demise, were just pushed and jambed naked into a hollow log, no more trouble being taken over them.

The bodies of young boys and girls were never skinned or mutilated, but usually put up on the tree-platforms unless they died suddenly and in good condition when they might be eaten by men and women, the entrails, etc., being cut away and buried under three sticks as already described. The corpse of a very young child was roasted whole, and eaten by old women only. New born babies might be killed and eaten, only by the old women, immediately after birth, especially if this process had given the mother much pain or trouble: it was usually the midwife who screwed the infant’s neck round, breaking it by holding the jaw and back of the head between the two hands and so twisting it round. Similarly, if the mother died in child-birth, the child was deemed guilty of having killed the mother, and was invariably immediately killed and eaten by the old women.

⁷⁷ Purposely made by some old scoundrel of a “medicine-man” the night before.

The mourning was either relative to mutilations or to decorations. Men, old and young, jabbed their heads with points of the spears or with tomahawks until the blood flowed: the older men were always keener on this. Similarly, the old women banged and cut their heads with the digging-sticks: the young ones would cut the whole front of the thighs in parallel lines of small incisions with pieces of broken flint or sharp shell.

Red was the essential colour of mourning. In the case of the old men, the entire back, front, limbs and face were covered with this, relieved here and there with a splash of pipe-clay, but none on the face. The old women were similarly painted, but with more splashes of white which was also specially dabbed on the face. Feathers (swan's, etc.) tied up into bunches and covered with raddle, were fixed with beeswax into the hair of old women only. The immediate relatives and near friends would keep these decorations on for perhaps two or three months, whereas the others would drop them after a few days. The young men and young women would never wear the red paint or feathers as signs of mourning. No eulogy of the deceased took place, neither was his name mentioned.